

AYRSHIRE JOINT PLANNING STEERING GROUP
13 May 2010

Central Scotland Green Network

PURPOSE OF REPORT

1. To explore the potential of forming a regional green network partnership within Ayrshire to support the Central Scotland Green Network Partnership Board in the co-ordination and implementation of the Central Scotland Green Network National Development.

BACKGROUND

2. Since the last meeting of the steering group the CSGN Board has issued for consultation a prospectus “Central Scotland Green Network- changing the face of Central Scotland”. This document sets out a draft vision for the Central Scotland Area and outlines ten goals for the period up to 2030. The prospectus is also supported by a draft work plan. Both documents are currently being considered by individual Councils.
3. As outlined in these documents a key priority for the CSGN Partnership Board will be to focus on creating the conditions for success by developing with partners across central Scotland a funding and delivery strategy for the period 2010-15, securing partner commitment to the CSGN vision and enhancing the capacity of partners to deliver early action on the ground.

FUNDING

4. Although specific funding to support the national development has not been announced it is clear that additional funding will be forthcoming. This funding is likely to focus on delivering elements covered by the national designation and closely related to the recent work plan published by the CSGN Board. This will include funding for;
 - Woodland expansion and management
 - Improvements to green space in and around communities, particularly those which support development plan strategies
 - Improvements to walking and cycling routes/networks (Active travel routes)
 - The restoration of vacant and derelict land for green network purposes

- Strategic habitat network development
- The integration of woodland, habitat, greenspace and access with water catchment and coastal zone management.

Priority is likely to be given to projects which can show significant impact and change on the ground over a short period of time and which can also demonstrate longer term opportunities for green network enhancement.

This potential source of funding offers significant opportunity to deliver on a range of priorities currently identified within Ayrshire, however it is also clear that if the full impact of any additional expenditure is to be capitalized on discrete local actions in themselves may not be sufficient and a more strategic, co-ordinated, and integrated approach toward green network delivery is appropriate.

PROPOSAL

5. It is apparent from discussions with the Government agencies responsible for taking this project forward that a co-ordinated approach from Ayrshire would benefit the development of the overall project. In both the west and east of Scotland the project is being developed in conjunction with two existing partnerships; Glasgow and Clyde Valley Green Network Partnership and Edinburgh and the Lothians Green Network Partnership. In Ayrshire, therefore, the proposal would be to facilitate through the Joint Planning Unit a partnership with other agencies and bodies, as exemplified by previous experience within Ayrshire in the development of the Ayrshire & Arran Woodland Partnership, which would be capable of co-coordinating action and able to deliver future opportunities. Exactly how this might be developed would need to be the subject of detailed discussion between councils through the Technical Management Team.
6. Capacity and capability would by necessity have to evolve over time. The partnership would however seek to build upon existing structures and maximize existing commitments to the concept, in particular the expertise and delivery capability provided by East Ayrshire Woodlands.

REMIT

7. A possible remit for an Ayrshire Strategic Green Network Partnership could include the following:
 - Making the links between projects and organizations that provide grants advice and training.
 - Providing the interface between the national initiative and local organizations within Ayrshire
 - Adding value by attracting additional funding through the demonstration of partnership working within Ayrshire

- Strengthening the network of people and businesses involved in contributing toward a green network for Ayrshire and confirming with them regional priorities.
- Facilitating the delivery of the CSGN “Ten Goals” for 2030 within Ayrshire
- Raising awareness of the contribution a green network can make to the sustainable development of Ayrshire.

CONCLUSION

8. The development of a high quality green network within Ayrshire offers much opportunity and will not only contribute to wider objectives sought for Central Scotland but will also contribute toward many of the future environmental, social and economic challenges that Ayrshire faces. No single agency/body working alone can hope to deliver all that is required if the goals set out in the CSGN network prospectus are to be met. Sharing resources and illustrating best practice and working together at a strategic level will add value and enhance the contribution Ayrshire can make to achieve the vision set out for Central Scotland.

RECOMMENDATION

9. The Steering Group is asked to remit this report to the Technical Management Team for further discussion on the delivery of this national development within Ayrshire.

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